



# THIS WEEK IN AGRICULTURE

*News briefs from and about Idaho's agricultural industry*

## FEBRUARY 21-27

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### THE NEZ PERCE AGREEMENT: WIN-WIN OR GIVEAWAY?

BOISE, Idaho - In 1984, Idaho Power Company and the State of Idaho negotiated a settlement known as the Swan Falls Agreement, part of which was a requirement to adjudicate or settle water rights claims. A petition was filed in Fifth District Court in Twin Falls. On November 19, 1987, the court issued a commencement order for adjudication of the claims for the Snake River Basin.

One result of the adjudication process were claims by the Nez Perce Tribe for water rights which led to years of settlement discussion. In the spring of 2004, the settlement agreement was announced. The attached newsletter outlines some of the major portions of the settlement document as well as reasons for opposition to the agreement by the Idaho Farm Bureau and reasons for support of the agreement by the Idaho Water Users Association.

The agreement must be approved by Congress, the Idaho Legislature and the Nez Perce Tribe. Congress passed legislation as one of its final actions last year. Three bills have been introduced in the Idaho House of Representatives and the Nez Perce Tribe is supposed to vote in March.

Legislative hearings are being held by the House Resources and Conservation Committee on February 22, 2005, at 2 pm in the Hall of Mirrors and February 23rd at 1:30 pm in the same location.

Please note that the role of the Idaho Council on Industry and the Environment (ICIE) is to get information to policy makers and the public. There has been some confusion because IACI--the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry--has voted to support the agreement. ICIE, however, is not taking a position on the agreement as is consistent with our mission.

*For more information contact Pat Barclay at 336-8508*

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## **MIDDLE WOOD RIVER AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING REPORT**

BOISE, Idaho--The Idaho Association of Soil Conservation District (IASCD) water quality analyst located in Twin Falls has finalized a new water quality report. The report entitled "Middle Little Wood Water Quality Monitoring Report" summarizes a monitoring project designed to assess Best Management Practices (BMPs). These BMPs were implemented by land owners working with the Wood River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). This report can be found on the ISDA website at <http://www.agri.idaho.gov/gw/swtechreports.htm>

The surface water monitoring conducted within this watershed determined that BMPs applied to the project area had a positive effect to substantially reduce nutrients and sediment from entering the Little Wood River. The Wood River SWCD received funding through the Water Quality Program for Agriculture to implement agricultural BMPs in a 130,000 acre area between 1994 and 2004. The implemented conservation practices focused on conversion from surface to sprinkler irrigation, the installation of a bypass - flume at the Dietrich Canal diversion, and general agricultural best management practices. The monitoring project compared three monitoring events that were conducted in 1988 - 1994, 2000, and 2004.

This monitoring project has provided valuable information for the Wood River SWCD and partners to identify that the conservation project implemented was highly successful to protect water quality.

*For more information contact Kirk Campbell of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture at 208-332-8598 or Jennifer Clawson of the IASCD at 208-736-7349.*

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## **PGI FILES FOR TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE**

BLACKFOOT, Idaho -Potato Growers of Idaho is asking the United States Department of Agriculture to provide growers with assistance under a program intended to help compensate producers for damages suffered as a consequence of increased imports of foreign farm products. PGI filed a request for assistance under the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers program prior to the January 31 deadline.

"We have been studying the program for the last year to determine if we could prove our case to the government's satisfaction," said PGI Executive Director, Keith Esplin. "Several consultants have provided us with an analysis that conclusively documents a 30% reduction

in fresh market prices that was caused by a surge in frozen French fry imports from Canada." Because Idaho's crop is interchangeable from the fresh market to the frozen process market, the analysts concluded that the large volumes of imported Canadian French fries were the root cause of the loss in value suffered by Idaho growers for the crop year of 2003.

If the petition filed with the USDA is successful, it would mean that direct payments of up to \$10,000, and technical assistance and educational benefits would be extended to affected growers. Under terms of the program, USDA has 40 days from receipt of the application to consider its merits. As part of the process, PGI leadership will testify before a USDA panel in Washington, D.C. on March 2, 2005. Under terms of the program, all petitions are scheduled to be judged for eligibility by mid-March. Growers will then have 90 days to apply for benefits.

"We believe we are justified in seeking this assistance on behalf of our Idaho grower members," said PGI President Doug Hanks. "It's just a matter of making the case to USDA's satisfaction. We're confident that we have provided the government with what they need."

*News Release Contact: Keith Frank at 785-1110 or 243-1826*

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## **ISDA MARKETING MONTH AT A GLANCE**

**March** International Trade Office Managers Visitation to Idaho

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## **DIRECTOR TAKASUGI CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS**

Feb 17-22, 2005 National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NSDA) mid year meeting Washington, DC

Feb 25, 2005 SPEAKING - Western Treasure Valley Chambers of Commerce  
Ontario, Oregon

Editor's Note: Please forward by 10:00 a.m. Thursday any press releases or information to [ksodhi@idahoag.us](mailto:ksodhi@idahoag.us).

